

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for synthesizing and distributing personal care products in a retail environment, comprising:

5 generating preference data in the retail environment, the preference data being representative of expressed preferences of a consumer with regard to personal care;

in response to the preference data, generating instructions for reproducibly synthesizing a first personal care product in a format perceivable and understandable by humans;

10 synthesizing the first personal care product in the retail environment in accordance with the instructions; and

providing the first personal care product to the consumer before the consumer leaves the retail environment.

15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein generating the preference data comprises employing a graphical user interface to record responses by the consumer to a series of questions.

20 3. The method of claim 2 wherein either of the consumer and a consultant employs the graphical user interface to record the responses.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the graphical user interface is generated by either of a stand-alone computing device and a networked computing device.

5. The method of claim 2 further comprising employing the graphical user interface to retrieve previously generated data corresponding to the consumer.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the previously generated data comprises at least one of identification data representing the consumer, and commercial behavior data representing previous commercial activity by the consumer.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein generating the instructions comprises any of providing the instructions in a graphical user interface, printing the instructions, and providing an audio representation of the instructions.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein synthesizing the first personal care product comprises manually combining predetermined amounts of at least two personal care product components according to the instructions.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the predetermined amounts are provided via a manually operated dispensing system.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the predetermined amounts are provided in previously measured increments.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the first personal care product to the consumer comprises placing the first personal care product in a container, the method further comprising generating customized labeling for the container.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the first personal care product to the consumer comprises providing the first personal care product to the consumer in a sample size container.

5 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising:  
transmitting the instructions to a manufacturing facility;  
synthesizing the first personal care product;  
placing the first personal care product in a second container larger than the sample  
size container; and  
10 sending the second container to either of an address designated by the consumer, and  
the retail environment.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing the instructions for future  
synthesis of the first personal care product.

15 15. The method of claim 14 wherein storing the instructions comprises either of  
electronically storing instruction data representative of the instructions and storing a paper  
copy of the instructions.

20 16. The method of claim 14 further comprising synthesizing an additional amount  
of the first personal care product in response to a request from the consumer in accordance  
with the stored instructions.

25 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the first personal care product comprises a  
fragrance, the method further comprising identifying a first fragrance with reference to a first

portion of the preference data, and identifying a second fragrance with reference to the first fragrance and a second portion of the preference data.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the first personal care product comprises a  
5 final formulation comprising a plurality of components, the method further comprising  
combining less than all of the components to synthesize an intermediate formulation, and  
providing a sample of the intermediate formulation to the consumer.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein the first personal care product comprises any  
10 of a fragrance, a cosmetic product, a skin care product, and a hair care product.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the final formulation comprises any of body  
wash, body lotion, hand creme, eye treatment, facial moisturizer, facial cleanser, facial  
balancer, shampoo, conditioner, body scrub, face mask, and face scrub.

21. A personal care product synthesized according to the method of claim 1.

22. A method for synthesizing a plurality of personal care products, comprising:  
generating substantially simultaneously preference data representative of expressed  
20 preferences of a consumer with regard to personal care;

in response to the preference data, generating instructions for synthesizing each of  
the plurality of personal care products; and

synthesizing each of the personal care products in accordance with the instructions.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the preference data are generated via a wide area network, and the personal care products are synthesized in a remote manufacturing facility.

5 24. The method of claim 22 wherein the preference data are generated in a retail environment, and the instructions for synthesizing the personal care products are generated in a format perceivable and understandable by humans.

10 25. The method of claim 24 wherein the personal care products are synthesized in the retail environment and provided to the consumer before the consumer leaves the retail environment.

15 26. The method of claim 22 further comprising presenting a plurality of questions to the consumer, the plurality of questions being selected from a preexisting set of questions with reference to the plurality of personal care products, the preference data being generated from responses to the questions.

20 27. The method of claim 22 further comprising identifying the plurality of personal care products as a customized system of products.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising associating a discounted system price with the system.

25 29. The method of claim 28 wherein the discounted system price is less than a sum of individual prices associated with each of the personal care products.

30. The method of claim 28 wherein the discounted system price is less than a sum of individual prices associated with each of the personal care products and at least one other additional product.

5

31. The method of claim 22 wherein the instructions include a first set of instructions for synthesizing a first instance of a first one of the plurality of products and a second set of instructions for synthesizing a second instance of the first product.

10

32. The method of claim 22 further comprising selecting the plurality of products in response to selections by the consumer.

15

33. The method of claim 22 wherein the personal care products comprise any of a fragrance, a cosmetic product, a skin care product, and a hair care product.

34. A personal care product synthesized according to the method of claim 22.

35. A system of the personal care products synthesized according to the method of claim 22.

20